

TRIBUTE TO FRED B. KFOURY, JR.

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Fred Kfoury, Jr., as the 1998 Manchester Chamber of Commerce "Citizen of the Year." I commend his outstanding achievement.

Fred is the President of Center Paper Products Company in Manchester, New Hampshire. His company employs forty-five people and is a fixture in the Manchester business community. He is described by his business associates as a very generous, thoughtful businessman. His company, that was passed on to him from his father, continues to grow and thrive.

Fred has always tempered his business success with a great devotion to volunteerism. His own philosophy, "Service to one's community is an integral part of his company's culture," has been readily apparent in his actions through the years. Fred has constantly maintained a record of service to his community that is highly admirable. He has been active in organizations from his college alumni association to the annual Christmas party for students and families at Notre Dame College.

As a former small business owner, I understand the demands of running a business. I commend Fred for his diligent work in his business as well as the devotion he has shown to the community. Once again, I wish to congratulate Fred on being named 1998 "Citizen of the Year" by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Senate. •

NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK

• Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to those men and women who have made the world we live in a better place through their advances in engineering. February 21-27 is the 49th annual observance of National Engineers Week to increase public awareness and appreciation of the engineering profession and of technology. Thousands of engineers, engineering students, teachers, and leaders in government and business participate each year.

Engineering is so intertwined in our everyday activity that it can often be taken for granted. The National Society of Professional Engineers and a consortium of more than 100 engineering, scientific and education societies and major corporations are working to increase the public's awareness during this week.

This year's theme, "Engineers: Turning Ideas into Reality," will focus on participants interesting with children from elementary to high school through demonstrations and question and answer sessions. Seventh and eighth-grade students are invited to design future cities and build three-dimensional scale models with the help of their teachers and volunteer-engi-

neer mentors. The National Engineering Design Challenge will team up high school students to design, build, and demonstrate a working model of a new product. And the Discover E program will reach more than five million elementary, junior and senior high school students to help them discover how engineering is applied in math, science and technology. Over 40,000 engineers nationwide will work with these students through hands-on activities in the classroom.

In Minnesota, "Discover E! in Minneapolis" was held on February 23 with the help of engineering students from the University of Minnesota and engineers from local businesses visiting 5th and 6th graders. The students were able to explore mechanical, biomedical, and environmental engineering through demonstrations and discussions about work and studies.

This week honors the birthday of one of the nation's first engineers, a surveyor named George Washington. It also recognizes the countless other engineers who have influenced nearly every aspect of our lives with their dedicated work and numerous technological advances. Their contributions to science include discoveries, for example, that have resulted in the development of ultra-lite materials such as Kevlar, and environmentally beneficial technologies such as a wastewater treatment system that effectively recycles 100% of all wastewater.

Schools have focused their teachings on the body of scientific knowledge, often times neglecting the process of discovery that engineers use to help create the new advances for our modern world. With the support of groups such as NASA and Minnesota-based 3M, programs during Engineers Week will integrate this process of discovery and the use of technology into mathematics, science, language arts, and other topics. I am a strong supporter of exposing our children to the world around them and hope this awareness will get them involved and spark interest in the future of engineering. •

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, three years ago this month, Congress and the President hailed the enactment of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This piece of legislation was intended to increase competition, expand consumer choice, foster new technologies and create new jobs. The Act contemplated the achievement of these goals through reliance on the marketplace rather than on a sluggish and burdensome regulatory mandate.

The implementation of the Act by the Federal Communications Commission has sailed way off course. Congress provided the universal service program as a means of ensuring that residents of rural and high-cost areas receive the same high quality services and the same affordable rates as their urban

counterparts. Yet universal service, one of the most important topics addressed in the Act, remains virtually unchanged by the FCC after three years despite the Commission's statutory responsibility to finish universal service reform in a "single proceeding" and within 15 months of passage of the Act. The FCC did complete a small part of the universal service mandate, the program bringing advanced services to schools and libraries. However, the Commission continues to ignore the most significant aspect of universal service reform, "the preservation and advancement of universal service" and high-cost areas. The Act commands that the Commission make the support mechanisms explicit and predictable. The Commission's failure to do so threatens the affordability of rural residential rates.

The uncertainty created by the FCC's failure to implement universal service is perpetuating the absence of local competition, especially in rural areas. As a consequence, local residential competition will remain at the current inadequate levels until the FCC addresses universal service. Congress intended that carriers providing service to residents of rural and high-cost areas would receive support for the "provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services" which would otherwise be absent in these areas. Accordingly, the Commission must make the now implicit subsidies explicit and sufficient in order to fulfill Congress' mandate.

Congress is still looking for more competition and more choice in all communications services, especially for rural residents. Let's allow the marketplace to work, which will give consumers in rural areas some real choices at affordable rates.

Mr. President, this year Congress will consider reauthorization of the FCC. I am extremely disappointed with the Commission's track record on implementation of the Act. As we contemplate legislation to change the FCC, its actions over the next several months will determine the outcome of our deliberations. I hope that the FCC will complete the universal service proceeding by July 1, and act in a manner consistent with the Act. I will not accept a universal service proceeding that puts upward pressure on rural rates, and I will hold the FCC accountable it fails to comply with the Act.

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